THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) The responsibility of providing security on the railways has been assigned to two agencies, namely, the Government Railway Police (GRP) which works under the State Government concerned and the Railway Protection Force (RPF) which is under the Ministry of Railways. According to the provisions of the Constitution of India, maintenance of law and order and control of crime on trains and railway premises are the responsibilities of the respective State Governments which they discharge through their Government Railway Police. RPF has been entrusted with the task of providing security to railway property which includes railways own assets and property entrusted to railways for transportation over its system.

(b) No, sir.

(c) In addition to various measures being taken by the GRP to improve the safety and security of the passengers, the Railway Administration is taking the following steps to help GRP in this task:—

1. RPF Officers have been directed to hold regular co-ordination meetings with their counter-parts of the GRP and Civil Police.
2. Sharing of Special Intelligence and Crime Intelligence between RPF and GRP is beign done at all levels.
3. Joint strategies for dealing with anti-social elements operating on Railways have been chalked out by the GRP and RPF.
4. RPF men are being trained in the identification and detection of explosive devices.
5. Field staff have been advised to maintain maximum alertness while on duty.
6. Sniffer dogs, wherever available, are being deployed at Railway platforms, yards etc, to sniff out explosive substances.

Agreement between AILRSA and Government for reduction of duty hours

3497. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was any agreement with the All India Loco Running Staff Association (AILRSA) and Government in August 1973 signed by the then Minister for Labour Shri K.V. Raghunath Reddy for the reduction of duty hours of Loco Running staff to 10 hours from"Signing on to Signing off".

(b) whether the same has been implemented;

(c) if so, the present position; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Some arrangement was arrived at after a series of meetings the Minister of Labour and Minister of Railways had with the representatives of Loco Running staff in August 1973.

(b) to (d) Instructions issued on 31-08-1978 & 03-04-1981 regulating the working hours of Loco Running staff were challenged before the CAT/Ernakulam Bench. Based on the guidelines laid down in the judgement delivered by the Hon'ble CAT on 10-01-1992, further instructions were issued in April, 1992 with the consent of both the employees' Federations viz. the All India Railwaymen's Federation and the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen, advising Zonal Railways that "duty at a stretch of running staff" should not ordinarily exceed 10 hours from departure of the train and overall duty from 'signing on' to 'signing off' should not exceed 12 hours, save in exceptional circumstances like accidents, floods/breaches, agitation, equipment failures etc. Implementation of these instructions is being monitored at

divisional/Zonal and Railway Board's level to ensure proper compliance of the instructions.

Express train between Hyderabad and Chennai via Nadikudi

3498. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA SWAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representation has been received by Railways to introduce one more express train between Hyderabad and Madras via Nadikudi;

(b) if so, details of this representation; and

(c) what steps will be taken by Railways to introduce this new train to meet public demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Some representations have been received regarding introduction of a new train between Hyderabad and Chennai via Nadikudi/Extension of 7005/7006 Nagarjuna Express upto Chennai.

(c) Introduction of a new train between Hyderabad and Chennai via Nadikudi has been examined but not found feasible at present due to operational and resource constraints.

Over-night Express train between Visakhapatnam and Madras

3499. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA SWAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Andhra Pradesh Government has made any representation for an over-night express train between Visakhapatnam and Madras;

(b) whether any efforts have been made by the Railways to introduce an over-night train on this sector;

(c) if so, the reasons for not introducing an over-night train on this route;

(d) whether there is no over-night train presently operating on this route; and

(e) if so, the steps proposed to meet this demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No, Sir.

(b) 6003/6004 Chennai-Howarh Mail (daily) and 5 non-daily trains viz 6324 Howarh-Trivandrum Express (biweekly), 6310 Patna-Cochin Express (weekly), 5624 Guwahati-Cochin (weekly) 5626 Guwahati-Bangalore Express (biweekly) and 6322 Guwahati-Trivandrum Express (weekly) are providing an over-night service between Visakhapatnam and Chennai. It has been decided to introduce Howrah-Tiruchchirappalli Express (triweekly) in 1998-99 which will provide an over-night service between Chennai-Visakhapatnam in one direction.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

Filling up of vacancies in Railways arising due to retirement

3500. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the vacancies fallen vacant due to retirement have not been filled up; and

(b) if so, as a consequence thereof the existing workers such as the running staff, are forced to work for un-limited hours of duty superseding relieving points and head quarters which causes safety hazards for these safety category workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Occurrence and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process and the vacancies occuring due to various reasons including retirement are filled up by recruitment from open market, and by promotion of serving employees etc. While a few vacancies are bound to exist in this continuous process at any given